

OFFICIAL SUBMISSION

To

CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY SENATE

For the Creation of

THE CENTRE FOR MATURE STUDENTS

February 8, 1978

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1. RATIONALE

1.1 Introduction

The enhancement of the quality of students' educational experience at university is one of the principal aims of the newly-created organizational structure in Arts and Science concerned with the establishment of colleges.

In The Report of the Academic Deans to the Concordia Senate concerning the academic organization of the University dated February 7, 1977, there is the following statement: "We recommend that some number of university colleges be established, each built upon a single, unifying theme, philosophy of education or function." (3.3.1) In this same document, some of the ways in which the needs of Concordia students would be met by the colleges are specified: "In addition to their academic functions such as student recruitment, counselling, registration, and developing and offering programmes, the university colleges should play a significant social role in the life of the students." (3.3.1)

It is in this same spirit of concern for the quality of students' experience of university life that a proposal for the establishment of a Centre for Mature Students is made by this Committee.

Concordia University has a tradition of providing for the mature student. It is desirable that this tradition be built upon to maintain leadership for the future. Concordia was one of the first institutions in Canada to offer university courses for credit to part-time evening students. The Montreal community continues to see Concordia as the place where university education is available to those who could not otherwise obtain it. Our role in fostering adult education is recognized also in the educational system of Quebec. Indeed, Quebec has accepted

it as our "mission fondamentale," (Cahier IV, pp. 284-285). It may be argued therefore that we are committed to develop this "mission." A Centre for mature students will provide us with this opportunity. It will also be a visible and concrete symbol of the seriousness of our plans in this area which, according to forecasts, will be one of steady growth in the coming years.

1.2

Mature Students: Their Needs and Expectations

Adults returning to formal schooling after a certain number of years have specific needs and problems. They also bring to their new learning experience a unique set of expectations and aspirations. A central concern of the Centre for Mature Students will be to meet the needs and expectations of these students by providing them with sound academic guidance and with encouragement and support, thus facilitating entrance into university life. Mature students entering the university generally belong to one of the following groups:

- a) Young adults, usually between the ages of 21-31 who may have dropped out of high-school or CEGEP to enter the work force and who have subsequently decided to return to formal studies to gain a degree. Generally, the goal of these students is to qualify for a better job, or prepare for another career;
- b) Married women with children in the home who wish to prepare gradually for some future occupation for which a degree, diploma or certificate is required;
- c) Men and women in mid-career who, because of threatening job obsolescence or impending early retirement, return to university to retrain for another occupation;
- d) Persons who wish simply to learn more for the satisfaction and heightened awareness this may bring.

Most of the students described above are beset by anxieties regarding their ability to cope with studies at

the university level. For the CEGEP or high school dropout the decision to return to formal studies is often a manifestation of a change in personal values and attitudes with a corresponding apprehension as to whether he/she can muster the necessary perseverance to attain the desired goal. For those who have been away from school for many years there is the fear that they have become too rusty -- that they may be incapable of anything approaching intellectual rigour.

On the other hand, a great many of them come armed with a considerable determination to succeed. This strong motivation to do well seems to spring in part from the very self-doubts which they experience -- it is for them a question of self-esteem, of proving that they can do university work. The need for an enhanced self-image is not always consciously articulated, yet one can readily perceive when in contact with these students that it is one of the underlying compulsions moving them towards the acquisition of a degree, a certificate or just a good grade in a single course.

This compulsion, added to that other very strong, perhaps primary motive animating most of them -- the desire for a more interesting or better paid job or a different lifestyle -- makes for a very powerful impetus towards academic achievement. These people are second-chancers but not academic second-raters; as such they merit our serious consideration and help with their problems of integration into university life.

1.3 Problems and Needs of Mature Students

The areas in which help is most needed by mature students are academic guidance and orientation to university life. It is understandable that some of these students may have lost over the years a certain measure of the knowledge and skills necessary for university courses,

such as proficiency in writing or in basic mathematics. It will be the responsibility of the Centre's group of Advisors/Fellows to devise ways and means of assisting these students in rectifying deficiencies in basic skills. It will also be a key function of the Fellows to give mature students an academically responsible direction to their studies by recommending that certain core introductory courses be taken first.

Mature students are unfamiliar with university structures and the great array of our undergraduate programme offerings. Consequently, those for example who have completed the extra credit requirements in our Mature Student Programme are very often unable to make an informed decision about their area of concentration in the undergraduate mainstream. The Centre will address itself to this problem by soliciting the aid of the departments and the relevant student services such as Admissions and Guidance in an endeavour to present and explain to students the full gamut of available options at Concordia.

1.4

Special Services to Students

As part of its function of meeting the needs of mature students, the Centre will develop a much-needed support system for them by means of special programmes of an academic and para-academic nature. The Centre will consider, for example, the implementation of workshops on learning skills -- on how to study, how to improve reading, how to use the library. Sections of the introductory courses in the various disciplines especially tailored to the needs of mature students will be given by the Fellows of the Centre or other interested faculty members; or, extra lab/discussion sections of qualifying and first-year courses could be organized. To build the self-confidence which most mature students lack, the Centre will establish on-going seminars on such topics as self-development, self-

assertiveness, on how to cope with the combination of the family/job/studies situation in which so many of them find themselves.

1.5 Research

Concordia has a solid reputation in adult education. To maintain this reputation, certain long-range goals need to be established in such areas as special services to the outside community and in research work. A central organizational structure such as the proposed Centre is needed to generate and effectively carry out such activities.

It will be the responsibility of the Fellows of the Centre to keep abreast of current research in adult education and to recommend that specific studies be completed. Some of them will choose to carry out research projects in this field.

1.6 Recruitment

Another key function of the Centre will be to attract students. We believe that the existence of a Centre such as we propose, with the kind of academic and other services we project, will be of considerable appeal to potential students and encourage many who would otherwise not venture entering a university. Also, the Fellows and staff of the Centre, given their experience and first-hand knowledge of mature students and their needs, will be of considerable assistance to Liaison in the planning and implementation of promotional programmes.

1.7 A Home Base for Mature Students

The Centre will play a social/supportive role in the life of the older student entering university. It will thus foster a sense of place and a sense of belonging in the older student who tends to feel isolated and ill at

ease in a huge, impersonal university full of young faces. Most older students have little time for social and extra-curricular activities, nevertheless, the need for the moral support derived from human contact is keenly felt by them. The Centre will offer students the opportunity to drop in to attend a special lecture, to exchange ideas with faculty members and meet other students with whom they have much in common.

1.8

Summary

In sum, the functions of the Centre for Mature Students, presented in outline in this part of the Proposal, are seen as the vital components of the Centre's two-fold aim which is:

- a) to provide Mature students with a first-rate introduction to university studies and to integrate them into the life of the university.

We are confident that this can be achieved by paying careful attention to curricular guidance and orientation, by conducting special academic activities and special seminars and workshops designed to build student's self-confidence and by providing a "home base" to which they could always turn. The person who "graduates" from the Centre will be a better prepared, more enthusiastic student with a stronger sense of what he wants and how he will attain it.

- b) to maintain Concordia's tradition and recognized leadership in the field of adult education and develop its ability to meet the challenges of growth in this sector in the coming decades.

According to all forecasts, the number of adults over the age of 25 who will undertake university studies will continue to grow in future years. The Centre will plan programmes to meet the educational needs of older students in the outside community, foster research in this field

and promote recruitment. It envisages its role in these areas as a dynamic one, evolving as the concept of on-going, life-long learning gains ground and growing according to the needs of the community.

2. THE CENTRE'S CLIENTELE AND GROWTH POTENTIAL

2.1 Student Membership

Membership for the Centre will come from two sources. First there are the degree-seeking students who enroll in the Mature Student Programme (MSP) and the Mature Entry Programme (MEP)¹ who will remain members until the completion of the required extra credits. The time needed to accomplish this depends on their chosen pace of study and may take from one to three years (or longer in some cases). The enrollment figures for students in the Mature Student Programmes in 1976/77 in Arts and Science may serve as an indication of the approximate number of regular members the Centre may expect to handle in the coming years on each campus:

SGW	Full-time		322
SGW	Part-time	989	(330 F.T.E.)
SGW	F.T.E.	Total	<u>652</u>
Loyola	Full-time		133
Loyola	Part-time	596	(199 F.T.E.)
Loyola	F.T.E.	Total	<u>332</u>

In addition, other students will be invited to join the Centre. The categories of students which the Centre is likely to attract will be the adults who return to the University for another degree or for a diploma or certificate of some kind. Such members, it is expected,

¹See Appendix III, "Mature Student Programmes at Concordia."

will be attracted to the Centre by the congenial ambience and by some of the services of particular interest to them and by the kind of human contact and support that association with fellow students of a similar age and life experience can offer.

2.2 Enrollment in the Existing Mature Student Programme

. Enrollment in the Mature Student Programmes has been growing over the years and this despite the rather low profile given it by the University. In the Appendices to this document, we include a table listing the number of students enrolled in the M.S.P. from the years 1973/74 up to and including 1976/77¹ and a bar chart² based on these figures.

While it is difficult to assess the effect upon enrollment of the unsettled provincial situation in the immediate future, it is heartening to note that the very recent document de consultation published by the Commission d'étude sur les Universités (pp. 17-22) sees adult students, especially women, as the growing "new clientele" of Quebec's universities. This very recent study reflects the social and educational trends on the rest of the North American continent which all suggest that adult education, in its many permutations, will be on the increase in future decades. The following are a number of various indicators all pointing in the direction of future growth in this sector of education:

2.3 Trends in Education

- a) The concept of adult on-going education, or "éducation permanente," is gaining an ever-widening acceptance by society at large. Statistics confirm what one may

¹See Appendix I, "Pattern of Enrollment in the Mature Student Programmes."

²See Appendix II, "Student Enrollment in Mature Student Programmes."

readily observe -- that adults are returning to schools and universities for all kinds of courses, credit and non-credit, on a full-time or a part-time basis. The traditional belief that education is solely for the young is giving way to the idea that in a world of rapid change, education must be an on-going process in which individuals at all stages of life can be engaged.

- b) Social and economic pressures tend to propel out-of-school adults into undertaking learning activities for the purpose of effecting some change in their personal or occupational situations. Young adults in their early and mid-twenties holding down jobs enroll in university courses, usually with some long-term career goal in mind. They may have dropped out of high school or CEGEP to enter the labour market and have now come to the conclusion that the possession of a university background is important for advancement on the job; or they may have decided to prepare themselves for a professional occupation for which a university degree is a requisite.
- c) The advancement of technology and automation renders some lines of work obsolete. New fields of employment created by these same forces are most likely to require skills of greater complexity, often entailing some training at a university level. People return to formal schooling for re-training, for the up-dating of skills or the acquisition of new ones. Some, approaching retirement, return to prepare for a second chance.
- d) Many segments of the population who did not previously consider going to university are now doing so almost as a matter of course; in this respect social or class barriers have almost vanished. As a result, many

individuals no longer feel isolated and eccentric if they choose to break out of the mould and take advantage of educational opportunities. In particular one might cite the arrival or return to university of housewives in their middle years who need more education to help them prepare for some meaningful occupation once their children are grown.

- e) Increasing numbers of wage-earners are entering university. Labour unions are more and more regularly negotiating, as a fringe benefit, the subsidization of workers who want to take courses at universities. Also, many large companies have such programmes covering all their employees.

Implicit in these distinct trends are changes in social attitudes and new evolving societal patterns of life which indicate that large numbers of people at various stages of their adult life will be involved in the learning process at the university level. There is every reason to suppose that a sizable portion of this potential student body will opt for a degree, for diplomas and certificates. The growth potential in adult education is a telling argument for the establishment of a Centre for Mature Students at Concordia.

3. FUNCTIONS OF THE CENTRE

3.1 Academic Guidance and Administration of the M.S.P.

One of the important functions of the Centre will be to coordinate and develop the existing Mature Student Programmes in the Arts and Science Faculty. Concordia's Mature Student Programmes require the completion of a certain designated number of extra credits. These credits should be completed before the students choose an area of specialization in the 90-credit programme.

Inherent in the M.S.P. structures is a certain obligation on the part of the University towards students admitted into the programmes. The majority of these students are not acquainted with university procedures and have but a vague notion initially of what courses to follow to obtain the desired degree. Moreover, as mentioned earlier in this proposal, the situation for most of them is aggravated by the fact that they have been out of school for many years and are not at all sure of their ability to succeed in this undertaking. It is clearly our responsibility therefore to give an academically sound direction to their studies and to make this introductory period for them as productive and encouraging as possible. The Centre will fulfill this responsibility by providing for the following:

3.1.1 Curricular Guidance on Entry

The main thrust of the discussion in the preceding paragraphs is to establish the prime importance of curricular guidance for students in the M.S.P. And it is for this same reason that we reiterate what has been said about academic counselling in our rationale, which in essence speaks of the need for recommendations to be made to each student to ensure that basic skills and knowledge are acquired before he moves on to more advanced levels. In other words, some degree of supervision over a mature student's "profile" will have to be exercised if he is to make the best possible use of the extra credits required of him. In the past, the 100 numbers attached to courses open to mature students served as a guideline for them. With the abolition of these numbers the need for scrutiny and closer direction will become even more pressing.

3.1.2 Information Regarding Undergraduate Areas of Concentration and Special Programmes

The choice of an area of concentration poses a

problem for most mature students. Many are not aware of the need for consultation with departmental advisors, nor are they aware of the full range of our programme offerings and majors-minors combinations. They ask about the benefits of a particular B.A. major or programme and very often would like to know where they could get aptitude tests to help them determine the field of studies for which they are best suited.

It is in this connection that the Centre could develop its "feeder role" and be of considerable service to the rest of the university by providing students with an overall view of the various options available to them as undergraduates. Students could then seek more detailed information in departments or colleges and thus be in a better position to choose the direction of their future studies. Also, variations reinforcing this basic orientation service will be introduced by the Centre from time to time. For instance, the Centre could well host a series of get-togethers between interested students (including former MSP students), and programme directors or departmental advisors who might wish to inform students about courses.

3.1.3 Administration

The Centre will provide facilities for the completion of routine paper work by the students. Such forms as requests for transcripts, change of address forms, registration forms, etc. will be available. Assistance will be given to students in the preparation of forms. This will be an important service to the student. The concentration of administrative services in one place -- an office which will be open from 9:00 in the morning until 9:30 in the evening -- will greatly reduce the frustration students now experience going from one place to another when trying to settle their affairs. For students who work by day, the fact that they could drop

into the Centre after regular office hours will be most welcome, and this in itself will help the University retain and attract more students.

The services outlined above are designed to meet the needs of on-going and prospective students working towards an undergraduate degree. However, they should not, on this account, be thought of as services conceived exclusively for this category of students. These services would naturally be extended to all mature students who ask for them.

3.2 Development of Special Academic and Para-Academic Services

By instituting special academic activities, the Centre will assist mature students in their intellectual preparation for undergraduate studies. Some of these academic projects will be of a remedial/review nature in which the Centre will solicit the aid and participation of the necessary service departments. Among the academic projects envisaged are the following:

3.2.1 a) On-going Workshops on Basic Learning Skills

To increase mature students' self-confidence and to help them re-acquire good study habits, the Centre proposes on-going workshops on learning skills such as:

- i) how to study;
- ii) how to improve reading skills;
- iii) how to use the library;
- iv) how to write a term paper.

3.2.2 b) Special Sections of Basic Courses

The Centre will mount, with the collaboration of relevant departments, special sections for mature students of first-year courses basic to the discipline, such as Major Authors (Engl. 241), Introduction to Psychology (Psych. 211), History of Europe in the Modern World (Hist. 210), General Chemistry

Chem. 201/202. While some of these sections will be taught by the Fellows of the Centre, others may well be staffed by other university faculty members interested in the problems of older students.

3.2.3 c) Lab/Discussion Seminars

The Centre will take into account that other forms of academic aid may be necessary and will be ready to organize seminars, series of lectures or workshops to meet the problem in a given area as the need arises. There is the possibility for instance, of organizing special optional lab/discussion sessions for courses known to be major hurdles for mature students.

3.2.4 d) Workshops on Teaching Methods

The Centre also envisages on-going workshops for its Fellows on teaching methods in courses for mature students. This might encourage experimentation and innovation in the area of programmes and instructional methods suitable for the adult learner.

Reinforcing the academic support that the Centre will offer to students, there will also be an on-going programme of para-academic activities designed to give students the moral encouragement necessary to sustain their efforts. For example, recognized experts in their field will be invited to speak before discussion groups on problems of particular relevance to mature students such as:

- i) how to reconcile the often conflicting demands of job/studies/family;
- ii) how to cope with the accelerating rate of change in jobs;
- iii) aging: how old is too old for studies, for a second career;
- iv) changes in social values and attitudes.

3.3 Services to the Outside Community

The Centre will establish closer links with the outside community and endeavour to meet its evolving educational needs. We expect for example to see in the years ahead more and more people aged 45 and over fitting into new careers. In cooperation with the Guidance Office, which might help with change-of-career planning, the Centre could offer qualifying programmes or courses.

The Centre will also give thought to the question of education for retirement which is generating more and more community interest and concern. Relatively short programmes -- certificates, perhaps -- would be instituted. The certificates could be worth approximately thirty credits and could count toward a degree. Programmes could be developed in almost any discipline. Courses for such certificates will be chosen because they offer a broad overview of the subject and provide the student with a firm academic foundation for continuing studies on his own if he so chooses.

3.4 Research

Fostering research in adult education will be of prime importance for the Centre. The Centre will stand in need of studies which could throw light on all of the Centre's concerns and constitute the pool of up-to-date knowledge in the structuring of the special services it will undertake. Some of the Fellows of the Centre may become actively involved in such studies, and it is to be expected that they will all be cognizant of current research in this field and will make recommendations on behalf of the Centre that certain specific studies be completed.

It has been suggested for example, that one of the greatest needs in adult education research is the initiation of longitudinal studies. Most research projects have been concerned with cross-cultural surveys. Even though

these have been carried out at different times in different places, they are providing essentially similar results. What is needed is firm information on presently enrolled participants and follow-up studies in future years.

Other areas in which research projects can be profitably initiated and supervised by the Centre are indicated in brief as follows:

- i) Levels of achievement of adult part-time learners compared to full-time learners;
- ii) The efficacy of directed vs. self-directed adult learning;
- iii) Motivation for participation and perceived benefits of adult learners and the discrepancy (if any) between the two;
- iv) Methods of course delivery to adults;
- v) Techniques of course delivery to adults;
- vi) Styles of management;
- vii) Reasons for drop-out;
- viii) Sociological factors affecting participation;
- ix) Needs assessment.

3.5 Recruitment

Fellows and Staff members will be ideally placed to gather information about the needs of potential students. Mature student recruitment thus far has been sporadic and mostly on an ad hoc basis.¹ It was enough, nevertheless, to indicate the existence of potential sources of mature students -- sources which could be explored more extensively. For example, more thought should be given to discovering new imaginative ways for extending contacts with women's groups, with ethnic communities, with people on the verge of occupational changeovers. What the

¹See Appendix IV, excerpted from Brief on the Mature Student Programme.

situation calls for is the formulation of a plan of action for recruitment -- one which could be implemented with a measure of method and consistency and yet be flexible enough to allow for a spontaneous response to unforeseen opportunities or to alterations in the social environment, as these occur.

3.6 Implementation of Programmes

The existing Mature Student Programmes in the Faculty of Arts & Science will form the nucleus of the Centre's operations.¹ The Centre thus has the advantage of having an operating base in place upon which it can build immediately after the Fellows/Advisors are selected. As for the Centre's total proposed programme we envisage that implementation will take place in three stages.

Details of the projected phase-in stages are given below and it must be noted here that they are meant to indicate the focus of emphasis which will be directed upon a certain set of activities during a given period of time, but the key word in this context is emphasis and not exclusiveness. Attention must be paid to other activities at the same time. Our sense of the general time-tabling we will adhere to may be stated as follows:

Stage I - Internal, within the Centre:

1. Naming of Fellows;
2. Developing a budget for special seminars;
3. Initiation of some programmes in the second term, such as workshops on study skills;
4. Establishing structures;
5. The naming of a permanent Director and Associate Director by the Fellows of the Centre and the Governing Council;
6. Establishing and staffing the special sections of basic first-year courses in the Faculty of Arts & Science.

¹See Appendix III, "Mature Student Programmes at Concordia."

Stage II - External but within the University:

1. The implementation of research;
2. Development and implementation of seminars and lectures connected with the projected special services to students;
3. Aiding Liaison in the planning and execution of recruitment programmes.

Stage III - External - Reaching Out to the Community:

1. Mounting special programmes for older people in the community at large, such as:
 - a) courses related to the planning of a second career;
 - b) courses related to education for retirement.

4. ADMINISTRATIVE REQUIREMENTS

4.1 Governance of the Centre

For governance the Centre will need:

- a) A Director who will report to the Provost and whose duty it will be to oversee the Centre's operations. The Director will also teach at least one course in his/her department.
- b) An Associate Director who will also have teaching responsibilities.

For the first year of the Centre's operation, the Provost will appoint an Interim Director whose responsibility it will be to name the Fellow/Advisors of the Centre. The Fellows, in consultation with the Centre's Governing Council, will in turn appoint a regular Director and Associate Director.

In addition, the Centre will require:

- a) A Governing Council consisting of the Directors, Fellows, Student Representatives and a number of other

members from within the university, including representatives from the Registrar's Office, Liaison, Guidance and the Library.

- b) An Advisory Board to be composed of interested persons drawn from outside the university to ensure a close liaison between the Centre and the outside community.
- c) Fellows - Resident and Associate. Initially, the number of Resident Fellows the Centre will require will be ten in all for both campuses. The distinction between a Resident Fellow and an Associate Fellow in the Mature Student Centre is essentially one of degree of involvement. The Resident Fellow will teach a special section of a basic introductory course central to his/her discipline and play an active role in the day-to-day life of the Centre. The Associate Fellow will teach a special section of a basic course or conduct a seminar or perhaps take on some of the advising of the Centre's students -- especially with reference to courses or programmes in his own discipline. The Associate Fellow will also play a role in the governance of the Centre.

The Interim Director, in consultation with the Provost, Vice-Provost and members of the Planning Committee, will invite interested individuals from the full-time faculty roster in Arts and Science to join the Centre on a Resident or Associate basis. Negotiations will then take place between the departments and the Centre regarding the matter of compensation for the time expended by a full-time faculty member on behalf of the Centre. For example, a Fellow might receive a 3-credit remission on his departmental teaching load or an extra stipend established at part-time rates. It is also possible that some other kind of arrangements may be worked out.

The role of the Fellows within the Centre is crucial to its success. Students will benefit because of the quality of guidance that experienced and committed full-time faculty can offer. The teaching of first-year courses where there are large numbers of entering mature students by instructors attuned to their needs will be another benefit.

4.2

Support Staff

A Centre for Mature Students, because of the very nature of its operations, should be open to students on a 12-hour basis, from 9:00 in the morning to 9:00 in the evening. It is in the evening hours especially that the part-time students will need the Centre's services. Therefore, the minimum requirement for support staff will be:

- a) Three Secretary/Registration Assistants;
- b) Two Secretaries.

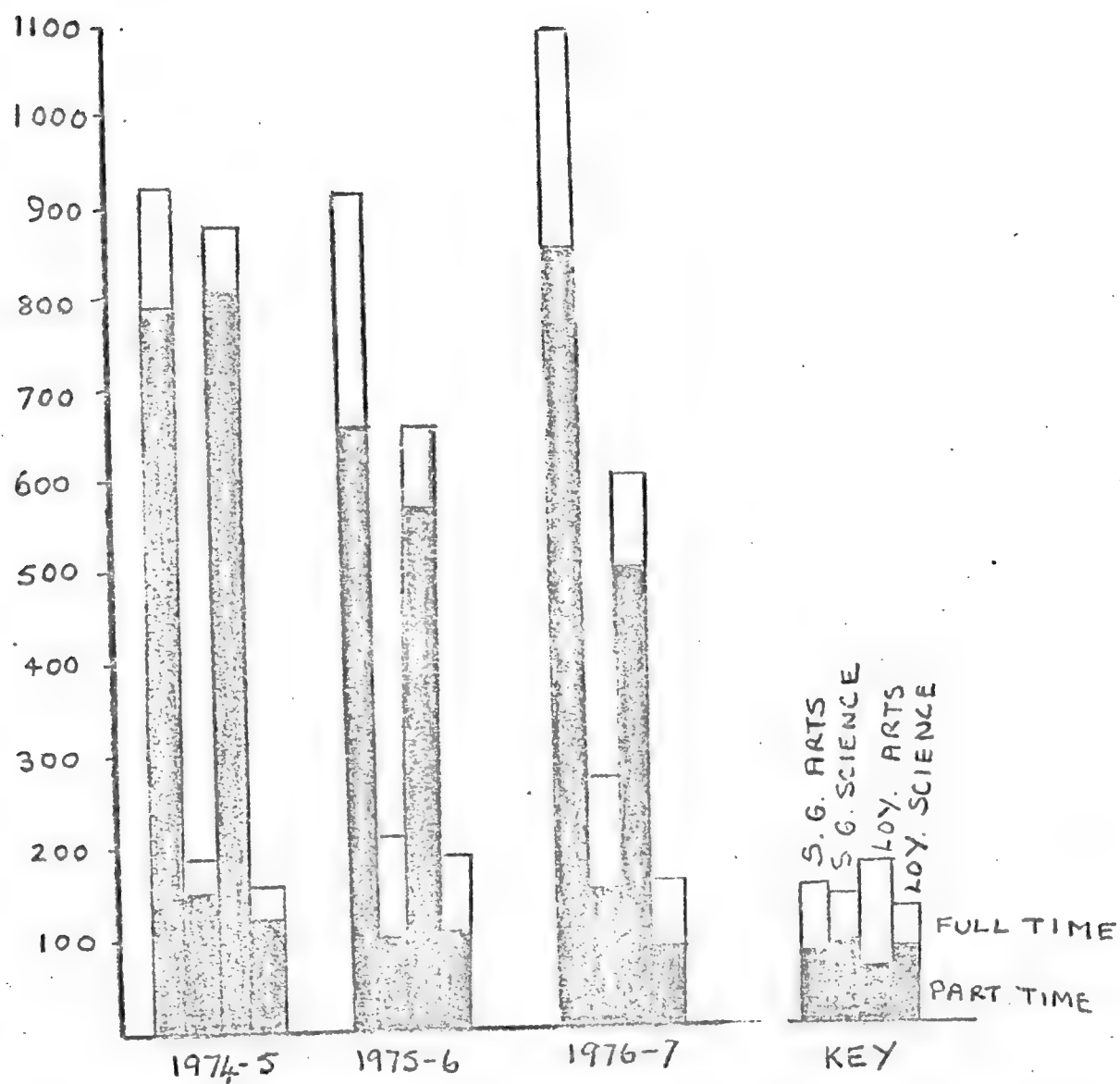
5.1 APPENDIX IPattern of Enrollment in the Mature Student Programmes

The table below lists the number of students enrolled in the M.S.P. from the years 1973/74 up to and including 1976/77. Figures for 1977/78 have not been made available as yet.

		<u>SGW Full Time</u>				<u>LOYOLA Full Time</u>			
		<u>73-4</u>	<u>74-5</u>	<u>75-6</u>	<u>76-7</u>	<u>73-4</u>	<u>74-5</u>	<u>75-6</u>	<u>76-7</u>
Arts	Collegial	443	34			847	81		
	MSQP	0	146	MSP 262	219	0	78	92	65
B.Ed.					0				
Commerce		245	31			466	58		
		0	54	125	148	0	51	85	57
Admin.					7				7
Engineering		127	18			51	2		
		0	53	75	116	0	0	8	9
Fine Arts		0	0				0	9	2
		0	8	49	53				
Science		215	18			406	32		
		0	36	109	103	0	24	58	68
Computer Science		0	0						
		0	0	20	29				
		<u>SGW Part Time</u>				<u>LOYOLA Part Time</u>			
Arts	MSP & Collegial	832	96* MSP 771	MSP 653	854	448	808	MSP 564	510
B.Ed.					1				
Commerce	MSP & Collegial	449	36 416	368	461	604	720	518	283
Admin.					0				18
Engineering	MSP & Collegial	194	4 207	121	172		0	0	2
Fine Arts	MSP & Collegial	0	7 13	69	125		0	17	5
Science	MSP & Collegial	152	15 154	97	135	119	177	118	86
Computer Science									
	MSP & Collegial	0	0	48	76				

* Re Coll. 96 - Another chart lists these 96 as U1

5.2

APPENDIX II

STUDENT ENROLMENT IN
MATURE STUDENT PROGRAMMES

1974-5 TO 1976-7

5.3

APPENDIX IIIMature Student Programmes at Concordia

Concordia's Mature Student Programmes are structures which allow for the integration into the University of students who do not possess the necessary academic pre-requisites to become regular undergraduates in the 90-credit mainstream. Such students must be 21 years of age or over and must complete a certain number of extra credits before they start on their 90-credit programme. The difference in the number of credits required of these students is based on their age at the time of entry -- hence the existence of two programmes:

- a) The Mature Student Programme (MSP) -- for those students who are 21 years of age but under 25. Students in this age group are required to complete 30 extra credits in courses at the introductory level.
- b) The Mature Entry Programme (MEP) -- for those who are 25 years of age or over and who must complete 18 extra credits in courses at the introductory level.

A mature student enrolls in one of the Faculties and is said to be, for example, in "Pre-Arts," "Pre-Science," or "Pre-Commerce" while he is completing his extra credit requirements or "mature student profile." Each Faculty sets its own regulations for mature students but a common concern underlies all such stipulations -- that of ensuring that a student possess the necessary basic skills before he embarks on the 90-credit programme of his choice. In Pre-Arts and Pre-Fine Arts, 6 credits in English are mandatory. Pre-Science requires certain courses in mathematics, etc. After the completion of the extra credits required, a mature student automatically becomes an undergraduate by

choosing an area of concentration and by registering in the department or departments of his choice. It is possible for a full-time student to complete the MSP or MEP within one year; on the other hand, part-time students often remain in the Programmes for two, three or more years.

5.4

APPENDIX IVStaffing of Courses Open to Mature Students

The adoption of a deliberate policy and the setting of certain guidelines are very much needed concerning the staffing of courses open to mature students. Some measures should be taken to ensure that in the selection of instructors for these courses the presence of this group of students is taken into account and that the choice is not subject to the contingencies of a given moment.

That our success in attracting and keeping mature students with us depends to some important degree on the quality of the classroom experience in their initial courses is a reasonable assumption to make. Dr. Bhatnagar's study reveals that out of a total of 630 mature students at Sir George in 1972-73, 273 or 40% dropped out, and while no such figures are available for more recent years, it is my sense of the situation that the drop-out rate at present still hovers around this mark. The drop-out rate in the first year of university has always been relatively high and it is to be expected that it would be even higher among a group of students with jobs and family responsibilities. It is to be expected as well that some of these students will fall by the wayside as they discover that they have not the ability to cope or that university is not for them for some other good reason. But we should be concerned about those who drop out because of needless discouragement due to the absence of some help and moral support from a teacher at a time when such aid could have reversed the course of events.

Older students are diffident; lack of self-confidence is common to them all. In the first place in a culture which apotheosizes youth to the extent ours

does, many of them are diffident about their age. Secondly, all of them are at a disadvantage in their first classes when surrounded by regular undergraduates who seemingly know more than they do and who certainly are more familiar with the terminology of a subject and the learning process in general. Consequently, a put-down by an instructor tends to shatter them beyond reasonable measure. As discussed earlier in this paper, most of them tend to regard a professor with awe - they have not developed as yet the undergraduate's healthy insouciance in these matters which would help to put things in better perspective for them. Lest the drift of my argument be misinterpreted as a plea for some form of hand-holding or a proposal for watered-down course content let me emphasize here that this is not the case, for most of these students are anxious to measure up to the required norms. They want courses of serious substance for the same reasons other good students do, but also because it is only by completing courses of such calibre that they can build real confidence in themselves. What they need is some help over the initial hurdles by an instructor who is sympathetically attuned to their particular situation.

In practice this help is often no more than a show of approval when warranted and some extra time for the discussion of particular difficulties. It does, nevertheless, place some additional burden upon a teacher's time and energy and to be effective, he or she must necessarily be willing to be thus encumbered.

-- Extracted from Brief on the Mature Student Programme, pp. 12-13.

6. LIST OF SUPPLEMENTS

1. Joti Bhatnagar. Educational Experience of Part-Time University Students - Report 2 - Social Characteristics and Academic Achievement. June, 1975.
2. Joti Bhatnagar. Educational Experience of Part-Time University Students - Report 3 - Factors Associated with Drop-Out. June, 1975.
3. Commission d'Etude sur les Universités. Le Contexte Universitaire de Demain. Document de Consultation, II, February 1, 1978, 17-21.
4. Janny Lowensteyn. Part-Time Students at Sir George Williams - Some Aspects of the Quality of Student Life (Student Involvement, University Supportiveness) Examined. April 28, 1977.
5. Barbara Opala. A Brief on the Mature Student Programme - submitted to the Dean of the Faculty of Arts, April 1, 1977.

7. PLANNING COMMITTEE OF THE CENTRE FOR MATURE STUDENTS

Muriel Armstrong, Economics

Joti Bhatnagar, Education

Wynne Francis, English

Anne Galler, Library Studies

Gladys Lennox, Health Education

Janet Lowensteyn, Part-Time Students Association

Barbara Opala, Mature Student Programme and English

Douglas Potvin, Continuing Education and Andragogy

Michael Sheldon, Executive Assistant to the Rector

Martin Singer, History

Brian Slack, Geography

Janet Tripp, Audio-Visual